

The Channel Tunnel.

Wotacammund

14th April 1882.

For some time past, and especially during the recent controversy, I have thought much about the proposal to make a tunnel between Dover & Calais - And the conclusion I have come to is that we are better without it -

Commercially, the scheme would probably be a success. -

It is not to be supposed that the promoters of such a project, including capitalists, Engineers, Speculators, and Scientific men generally, have omitted to consider thoroughly whether the construction of a Channel Tunnel is feasible, and whether it will, eventually, pay a fair dividend on the Capital expended.

Socially, I think there would be but little change.

No doubt, there would be an increased passenger traffic between the two countries; if the journey from London to Paris could be made in the same carriage, But, it would be of the same class of people that travel now, and would not appreciably, if at all, increase the flow of continental business makers to London. —

A far larger number of people would, I believe, be induced to travel, if Steamers were built, large enough to accommodate railway carriages; and if sufficiently commodious harbours were constructed for such Steamers, on the coasts of France & England. —

Politically, in my opinion, a tunnel would be a source of great danger to England, and this point I do not think has been sufficiently considered by those who can see nothing to fear from the projected scheme. —

No one acquainted with the form of our government, or with the English character,

can suppose that we should ever be prevailed upon to make such arrangements as would render it practically impossible for an enemy to seize the Dover end of the tunnel, either by a coup de main, or by treachery. —

Even, if we admit that the tunnel could be made absolutely secure, would not its existence reduce us to a level with those nations on the Continent of Europe whose boundaries are continuous?

Would it not entail our keeping up a larger standing army than has hitherto been found necessary? And would it not in a measure, justify the fears with which people in England are frequently disturbed as to the possibility of an invasion? —

From a military point of view, more has been adduced for, and against the construction of a Channel tunnel than from any other. — And, although it would seem a comparatively easy thing

to come to a Conclusion, as to whether
England could be rendered as safe from
invasion with the tunnel, as she is without
it, there is no phase of this much de-
bated question which has given rise to
more Speculation, or to more diverse arguments;
Although Defiles have often been taken
advantage of, for the passage of troops
during war: - Notably in 1866, when the
Prussians under the Crown Prince, entered
Gothemia by Rastod. - I confess I do
not think a narrow road under the sea,
20 miles and upwards in length, leading
into a hostile country, could ever be
made use of for the advance of a large
army.

But, I am ready to admit that the
possession of the Dover end of the tunnel
would be of the greatest possible assistance
to an enemy, in the event of an invasion
by sea being determined upon -

I don't say that an invasion of England
would be an easy matter, or that, even

if an enemy got a footing upon our shores, we should not be able to deal with him. But, I am confident that such an undertaking is not impossible.

In fact, in war nothing is impossible — If then, an invasion is practicable without a tunnel, it surely would be easier with one. —

The possession of it, even for a few hours, would be of such priceless value to an enemy, that he would spare no expense to secure it. —

Under these circumstances, would it not be wiser for us to discontinue the construction of the Channel tunnel? As a nation it cannot benefit us, and it might become a source of great danger. —

Though I trust we shall always be able to maintain our supremacy at sea, we must remember that other nations are

gradually becoming great Maritime power,
and that one, at least, is doing its
utmost to rival us in the number, size,
and speed of its war vessels —

If ever an invasion of England is attempted,
such an enterprise will not be under-
taken without the most careful prepara-
tions, and without adopting every measure,
recognised as fair in war, to ensure
success —

Why should we permit any steps to
be taken, which could, by any possibility,
assist such an enterprise? or why
should we do away with the inestimable
advantage we now possess, in an
insular position?

Ed Roberts,